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WILDLIFE SERVICES—NEW HAMPSHIRE

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USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in New Hampshire

Every day, residents, industries, organizations, and agencies call on New Hampshire Wildlife Services (WS) for expertise in protecting agriculture, property, natural resources, and human health and safety from damage or threats posed by wildlife. As urban and suburban areas expand, human interactions with wildlife continue to increase as people encroach on agricultural, forested and wildlife environments. Managed by professional wildlife biologists, WS responds with effective, selective and humane strategies to resolve wildlife conflicts.

WS works to protect property, reduce human health and safety risks at airports; and abate game animal damage to fruit, row crop and livestock producers. The program also protects people, pets, and livestock from wildlife-borne diseases; guards natural resources from wildlife depredation; and educates the public about wildlife and wildlife damage management. Specific projects conducted by New Hampshire WS include: protecting endangered piping plovers and Karner blue butterflies; mitigating bear-human interactions; reducing on and off-site bird conflicts at solid waste treatment facilities, sampling and monitoring for rabies and Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD); reducing human health and safety risks to the public; and managing damage caused by gulls, deer, pigeons, starlings, and other wildlife.

Applying Science & Expertise to Wildlife Challenges

WS enables people to resolve wildlife conflicts by providing sound technical advice and the loan of damage management equipment and materials. Often, this technical assistance can be provided over the phone. WS also provides on-site expertise, or direct assistance, to manage complex wildlife problems that cannot be safely resolved by others. To support these efforts, WS conducts scientific research across the Nation to develop solutions to new problems posed by wildlife and to ensure that WS and others benefit from the latest science and technology.

Bear Damage Management and Assistance—Protecting agriculture, human health and safety and property through bear damage management is a major consideration for WS in New Hampshire. Black bear foraging activity



impacts honey producers and other agricultural commodities. In fiscal year (FY) 2004, the program responded to over 1,000 requests for assistance involving a variety of bear conflicts and also staffed a toll-free Bear Information and Referral Service. The program conducted over 250 site visits to protect beehives, livestock and public safety from bear conflicts and provided 95 cooperators electrical fences and harassment materials. In accordance with state statutes, formal wildlife damage assessments were conducted to document and reduce bear damage to specific agricultural crops. WS' damage abatement activities reduced the total funds reimbursed by the state to producers experiencing bear damage by more than 30 percent in FY 04.

Reducing Deer Damage—In cooperation with the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (NHFG), WS reduces deer and other wildlife damage to orchards, apiaries, truck gardens, horticultural commodities and livestock, which the National Agricultural Statistics Service estimates comprise over 65 percent of all farm marketing cash receipts in New Hampshire. WS mitigates wildlife damage to apple orchards as well as other commodities through the distribution of various wildlife damage management materials including: temporary and permanent electric fencing, repellents, pyrotechnics and site specific depredation permit issuance as appropriate. The program provided expertise, equipment and technical assistance to over 200 cooperators in FY 04. WS serves on the New Hampshire Wildlife Damage Control Advisory Board, which administers a cost-share fencing program to help protect commercial agricultural producers from wildlife damage.

Preventing and Controlling the Spread of Rabies—WS assisted the State Health, Wildlife and Agricultural Departments for the third consecutive year to distribute approximately 37,000 baits containing oral rabies vaccine (ORV) to attempt to prevent the further northward spread of raccoon rabies. The vaccination zone in the Upper Connecticut River Valley was expanded in 2004 to include the town of Lancaster, covering a 162 square-mile area. WS conducted raccoon sampling activities within the ORV zone to determine bait uptake, assess program effectiveness, monitor rabies movements and characterize raccoon populations.

Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports—Wildlife strikes to aircraft cost U.S. civil aviation over \$500 million annually and pose a signifi-

Top 5 Major Assistance Activities:

- Protecting agricultural commodities and property from bear and deer damage
- Protecting civil and military aviation from wildlife strikes
- Protecting endangered species from habitat loss and predation
- Reducing the spread and threat of human exposure to rabies
- Reducing on and off-site safety hazards and property damage at landfills

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to New Hampshire:

- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Managing public and animal health issues such as rabies and CWD
- Defining and reducing agricultural losses to turkey, deer, and bear
- Improving Canada goose damage management methods
- Managing starling and pigeon conflicts at dairy and livestock operations

cant hazard to air passengers. WS is recognized for its scientific expertise in reducing wildlife hazards to the aviation industry both nationally and in New Hampshire. The WS research program, the National Wildlife Research Center conducts research to develop methods to reduce hazards to aviation and maintains the National Bird Strike Database used by the FAA and airports to monitor trends and wildlife species of greatest concern to aviation. New Hampshire WS used this research to provide assistance to seven airports in the State.

In response to a May, 2003 significant turkey strike at Pease International Tradeport causing over \$3 million damage, WS conducted integrated turkey and other large bird harassment and removal activities. WS employed remotely controlled cameras to identify frequent travel routes, applied methyl anthranilate to grassy areas of concern and placed windmills on the perimeter fence to protect civilian and Air National Guard equipment. To reduce woodchuck damage WS conducted control activities, performed bird monitoring to assess hazards and participated in wildlife meetings. No turkey strikes were recorded in FY 04.

WS conducted harassment, control and hazard assessments at the Lebanon Municipal Airport in conjunction with an integrated gull harassment program at a nearby landfill. Less than 5,000 feet separate the facilities, which serve as loafing and feeding areas for gulls. Gulls comprised only four percent of all birds observed at the airport with no gull strikes reported in FY 04. WS provided consultations, direct assistance and training to airport personnel throughout the state and assists airports in acquiring federal and state permits that allow designated airport personnel to immediately address bird and mammal hazards at these facilities.

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring—WS continued to assist NHFG with CWD monitoring and sampling activities in 2004. The presence of CWD in NH's wild cervid populations would present significant challenges to wildlife agencies because of the impacts on the population itself, as well as perceptions regarding public health implications. WS collection and sampling of deer heads from check stations and meat processors comprised 82 percent (354) of all specimens submitted for testing in 2004. Statewide monitoring and sampling efforts are components of a nationwide program to detect for the presence of this disease.

Protecting Endangered Karner Blue Butterflies—To enhance recovery of the Federally and State endangered butterfly WS conducted woodchuck control activities to reduce foraging at two separate sites on the Pine barrens east of Concord, NH. Wild lupine is essential for completion of the butterfly's life cycle. WS treated 48 woodchuck burrows during the spring-summer reproductive period. In FY 04, butterfly reproduction was documented for the first time since the initiation of recovery efforts.

Protecting Endangered Piping Plovers—WS installed temporary fencing to enhance recovery efforts and nesting success of the Federally threatened and State endangered piping plover at Hampton Beach State Park Hampton, NH. Protective fencing enclosures were erected around plover breeding habitat to reduce nest and chick loss to predators, dogs, feral cats and; to also

minimize human disturbance. A durable, state of the art fencing material was installed to prevent beach erosion which has previously negatively impacted plover nesting success.

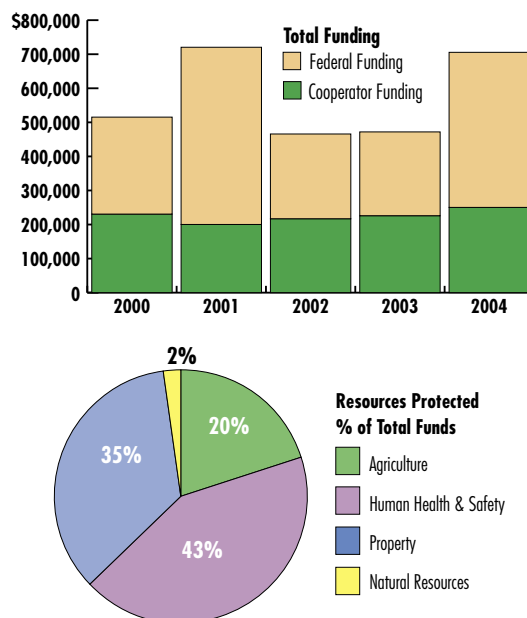
Protecting Property—WS conducted ongoing integrated gull harassment and monitoring projects at three separate landfills to reduce on and off-site conflicts associated with large concentrations of birds attracted to these facilities. Woodchuck control activities addressed burrowing activity and structural damage to an earthen dam operated by U.S. Generating Company and reduced property loss at a Housing and Urban Development facility. In cooperation with NHFG Canada goose round-up activities were conducted to reduce feces accumulations at High School sport fields, beaches and golf courses. WS assisted dairy producers and building owners in addressing problems associated with large concentrations of pigeons and starlings. Works with farmers and drainage districts in SE Missouri to protect multiple resources from beaver damage. Beaver dams flood crops, roads, and prevent irrigation waters from reaching the crops. Beavers also cut down trees and some crop plants for food or for dam building.

Looking to the Future

WS strives to provide citizens and visitors to New Hampshire with safe, effective solutions to a diverse range of wildlife conflicts. New Hampshire's increasing population of resident Canada geese poses increasing challenges for the protection of human health and safety as well as property, including airports, schools and private residences. WS continues to work with dairy farmers on the development and implementation of more effective, integrated management strategies to reduce consumption and contamination of animal feed by starlings, turkeys and pigeons. Emerging public and animal health issues such as rabies, Lyme disease, salmonella and CWD will continue to challenge wildlife managers in New Hampshire. In addition, education will continue to be central to an effective strategy for managing conflicts associated with bears and bird feeding activities.

New Hampshire Wildlife Services Funding

In addition to receiving federally allocated funds, WS also receives money from cooperators; such as producers; private individuals; businesses; and other Federal, State, and Local government agencies who have a vested interest in the program. In most cases, these cooperators need help to resolve wildlife damage problems or they play a role in wildlife damage management.



Major Cooperators

- New Hampshire Departments of Fish and Game, Agriculture, Health and, Environmental Services
- New Hampshire Farm Bureau Federation
- New Hampshire Cooperative Extension Service
- University of New Hampshire
- Pease International Tradeport; regional airports
- The cities of Nashua and Lebanon
- Private and public companies
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Federal Aviation Administration

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